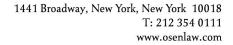
190 Moore Street, Suite 272, Hackensack, New Jersey 07601 T: 201 265 6400 F: 201 265 0303





March 1, 2023

VIA ECF

Honorable Taryn A. Merkl United States Magistrate Judge United States District Court, Eastern District of New York 225 Cadman Plaza East Brooklyn, New York 11201

> Re: Bartlett v. Société Générale de Banque au Liban S.A.L., Case No. 19-cv-0007 Plaintiffs' Motion to Compel Defendants' Production of Documents, ECF No. 270

Dear Judge Merkl:

We write in further support of Plaintiffs' motion to overrule Defendants' foreign bank secrecy objections and to compel Defendants to produce documents responsive to Plaintiffs' first request for production, ECF No. 270.

Since Plaintiffs filed their motion to compel ten months ago, noting, *inter alia*, that Lebanon Central Bank governor Riad Salameh had "repeatedly rebuffed the Public Prosecution's queries for information" into illegal bank transfers by Lebanese political elites, "citing banking secrecy and deferring to internal reviews by the banks themselves," Mr. Salameh has now been charged with corruption. *See Exhibit A*, Kareem Chehayeb, *Lebanon's Central Bank governor charged with corruption*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, Feb. 23, 2023, *available at* https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-business-beirut-lebanon-riad-salameh-c319b05680621a801b9798b3de49cb0a.

Concurrently, two of the Defendants in this case, Société Générale du Banque du Liban and Bank Audi, have been charged with money laundering, an action which Lebanon's caretaker prime minister has reportedly instructed security forces <u>not</u> to implement. *See* Exhibit B, *Lebanon PM seeks to block judge who charged banks, documents show*, REUTERS, Feb. 23, 2023, available at https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2023/02/23/Lebanon-PM-seeks-to-block-judge-who-charged-banks-documents-show. The current situation has been aptly encapsulated in a short documentary produced by *The New York Times* and published on February 28, 2023. *See* https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/28/opinion/lebanon-crisis-economy-bank-robbers.html?smid=url-share.

Given the rampant corruption delineated in these recently published reports and the compelling U.S. interests in deterring terrorism and vindicating the rights of American victims of terrorism, Plaintiffs reiterate Judge Scheindlin's observation that a foreign state's "interest in

¹ ECF No. 270-10, at 5

Case 1:19-cv-00007-CBA-TAM Document 317 Filed 03/01/23 Page 2 of 2 PageID #: Letter to Honorable Taryn A. Merkl, U.S.M.J. 16417 March 1, 2023 Page 2 of 2

building confidence in its banking industry does not encompass an interest in protecting the confidentiality of those who participate in the funding of international terrorism." *Wultz v. Bank of China Ltd.*, 910 F. Supp. 2d 548, 559 (S.D.N.Y. 2012).

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Dina Gielchinsky

cc: All counsel (via ECF)